## USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

## DEVELOPING LEADERS IN THE ARMY RESERVE

by

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## **ABSTRACT**

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This paper will examine leadership in the United States Army Reserve Troop Program Unit (TPU). It will examine the selection process and the training backgrounds required for the position as commander of a TPU. Leadership competencies and unit effectiveness is in question as the United States Army Reserve is mobilized more and more. To select the best Soldiers for future leadership roles, leadership development strategies need to include education, training, job experience, action-learning projects, mentoring, and coaching. This paper will provide recommendations for command leadership from the perspective of developing, maintaining, and sustaining effective leadership in the TPU.



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#### DEVELOPING LEADERS IN THE ARMY RESERVE

I challenge the Army leadership to live up to their sworn oath. I demand that those charged with leadership duties restore the faith of Soldiers in their command and its ability and willingness to respond to the needs of Soldiers underneath them.

- LT. GEN James Helmly, 2004

#### **BACKGROUND**

This paper identifies issues and offers recommendations regarding the United States Army Reserve (USAR) leadership development. The USAR is committed to military transformation as it enters into the 21 st century. To lend effectively in this volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous operational and strategic environment, commanders must "transform" in leading Soldiers. The military transformation of the 21st century will place tremendous stress upon units and unit leaders. Leaders' capabilities will remain the key to unit readiness. The challenges facing future leaders will be more complex than those faced today. Building and sustaining organizationally effective units, whether it is combat; combat support; or combat service support will remain a critical core competency for Army Reserve leaders of the 21st century.

Reserve leaders are currently facing new challenges. Information technology has changed the way wars are fought. Technology that provides real-time information to the battlefield provides an advantage against all other industrial-age armies. It is not only the technology that dominates the battlefield, but also the superb leadership of Soldiers. Technology is only a part of the equation on the battlefield. The more complex portion is leadership. The key to victory is the combination of technology and capable leaders who enable the United States Army to dominate adversaries on the battlefield.<sup>2</sup>

Missions change with increased urban and complex terrains that require self-aware leaders who can operate and adapt across a wide spectrum of operations. Armed with better situational understanding, leaders can make bold, quick decisions to solve complex problems. In today's operational environment, tactical actions by sergeants, corporals, lieutenants, and commanders can have strategic consequences with lasting impact on national policy. These demands highlight the need to assess current training and leader development doctrine and programs to determine whether they will provide the leaders required for increasingly complex battlefields that are anticipated over the next 25 years.<sup>3</sup>

General James R. Helmly, Chief of the Army Reserve (CAR), set in motion plans to reorganize training and strengthen leadership skills for Army Reservists in response to

preliminary findings of an inquiry into abuse of detainees at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. The findings described an inferior command climate and flaws in training that left some citizen Soldiers ill-prepared for long-term duty in a combat zone. General Helmly made this decision after seeing photographs of members of a Reserve military police unit abusing Iraqi prisoners.<sup>4</sup>

In a separate incident, the 343 <sup>rd</sup> Quartermaster Company, an Army Reserve platoon in Iraq, disobeyed orders to deliver fuel to another unit. The reason given by the Soldiers was that the fuel was contaminated with diesel. In a statement given to higher authorities, the Soldiers stated that the chain of command was informed that the gas was contaminated and that the vehicles needed repairs before another mission could be completed. According to the Soldiers, the commander would not listen and ordered them to move out. After much publicity, the commander was relieved of duty and the Soldiers were returned to the unit. The morale in the unit had been low for months prior to this episode, adding to the problem of poor leadership.<sup>5</sup>

After these two incidents, General Helmly ordered new training for all Army Reservists, most of whom serve in combat support and combat service support units. According to General Helmly, the new training programs will focus on combat skills and recognition that "this is a military organization," meaning that all Army Reservists will conduct themselves in accordance with military value.

For many years, the military focused on fighting the Soviet Union, but now a decade after the Cold War, that threat has disappeared. United States strategy and interests now require an Army trained and ready for major theater wars, smaller-scale contingencies, and peacetime military engagements. The foundation of this full spectrum credibility is the military's ability to dominate land combat. Success in full spectrum operations depends on leaders who consistently make better and faster decisions than their opponents, which means that battle command education and training must evolve and expand.<sup>6</sup>

Commanders must lead from the front, visualizing an expanded battle space; describing it clearly; and directing soldiers, units, and systems to accomplish all assigned missions.

Understanding, confidence, and trust between commanders and subordinates enable everyone to perform, even without orders. To develop and train leaders for this new operational environment will require relevant operational and educational experience. The question is whether current Army Reserve training and leader development systems are adequate to produce leaders for these information-age battlefields.<sup>7</sup>

The Army published its current training doctrine in 1987 to meet the Cold War needs; the doctrine is implemented in Field Manuel (FM) 7-0 (25-100), *Training the Force;* and FM 7-10 (25-101), *Battle Focused Training*. The doctrine's training principles and training management

have served the Army well. Today, the problem seems to be not the doctrine, but leaders who are not following the principles or the training management process. Increased taskings, high personnel tempo, excessive operational pace, and undermanned units have all interfered with observance of doctrine. Units have little time to train on mission essential tasks due to day-to-day responsibilities and the short time in which to do them.<sup>8</sup>

To develop leaders needed for the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the Army Reserves must develop leaders who can prepare the force for war. The Army Reserve must develop leaders who can apply doctrine to win battles and campaigns. As the Army Reserve looks toward the future, it must determine the best ways to train and develop leaders for full spectrum operations. Leaders are needed in peacekeeping and in time of war to lead the mission and prepare for the challenges ahead. To adapt to these challenges, the Army Reserve must change the way it trains.<sup>9</sup>

Looking at the Army Reserve and today's challenges, a more stringent and quality leadership must be set in place. There are many methods to measure unit effectiveness such as command inspections, readiness reports, Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) rotation results, and Army Training and Evaluation Programs to name a few. All these methods have proven to be effective, but it is only a measurement of certain qualities of leaders.<sup>10</sup>

For 200 years, leadership has been examined in numerous studies, books and articles. In the last decade, the Army has assessed and studied Army culture, organizational climate, leadership, and organizational effectiveness. However few analyses have attempted to tie the four together to examine the impact and relationship that leadership has on culture and organizational climate and the impact that culture and climate have on organizational effectiveness. John K. Murray notes, "fewer still have focused on determining how best to select and train our future leaders. Most of these studies and articles have found fundamental faults and have highlighted Army-sponsored survey results to build their case and make their point. It is now time to start seriously addressing these findings to move beyond the survey results and get around to addressing the issues." <sup>11</sup>

Army forces will depend more and more on joint interdependence than it has in the past. It will accomplish missions using forces that operate at higher tempos while being distributed across much larger operational areas. All units, not just combat units, must be prepared through training and leadership to succeed in this new volatile and ever changing environment. War has not changed, its nature remains the same: violent, emotionally searing, and intensely human. Ultimately, the success of Army Reserve Troop Program units depends on intangible human factors: leadership, discipline, endurance, morale, cohesion, and courage. Increasingly, smaller and smaller units will be tried and tested as never before. Maximizing unit effectiveness

within every unit will be an absolute necessity. The Army Reserve must begin now to prepare to meet that reality. <sup>12</sup>

Army Reserve senior civilian and military leadership has recognized this requirement and has begun to take steps to transform the Army Reserves to meet today's challenges. Lieutenant General James R. Helmly described the current state of the Army Reserve and offered a future direction. He acknowledged current and future operational tempos and identified a need to transform the Army Reserve from a force organized for massive linear mobilization to one that is flexible and expeditionary in nature. It is imperative that the USAR begin to identify the physical and mental capabilities required of future Soldiers and the necessary attributes and characteristics of the officers who will lead.

The CAR initiated a yearlong U.S. Army Reserve Leadership Campaign Plan (ARLCP) in early 2003. He also designated 2004 as the Year of the Leader in the Army Reserve. The ARLCP is the CAR's vision of changing the leadership culture in the USAR. It lists critical elements needed to improve leader behavior. The ARLCP provides the path to remove organizational barriers that impede leader development, allowing for Soldiers to do the right thing for the right reason and directing cultural change in Army Reserve leadership.<sup>13</sup>

There is a whole team of Army Reserve Soldiers and civilians who are dedicated in making the ARCLP work. The Year of the Leader has produced several actions that are currently taking place in the Army Reserve. Distribution of Leader Development Guides, a Team Leader Development Course and a Senior Leader Training Program has been instituted, as well as a Leadership Assessment and Development Program. The CAR has also instituted the Command Climate Assessment and stressed the importance of mentoring.<sup>14</sup>

The success of a unit depends greatly on strong leadership. The military leader wants to get the job done, no matter what it entails. Leaders deal with equipment and organizations, but, more importantly, they deal with Soldiers. The method in which the Army Reserve trains good competent leaders has changed very little in the last two hundred years. The current leadership doctrine clearly directs what a leader must be, know, and do. Leadership is taught at every level of the Officer Education System (OES), and the art of leadership is practiced during every operational assignment.<sup>15</sup>

An Army Training and Leader Development Panel (ATLDP) was formed in 2000 to assess training and leader development in Army Reserve units. The panel found that in combat support units, the problem areas dealt with issues concerning culture and climate and the Commander's ability to manage and shape each. This has been a leadership issue for several decades, a problem that will not disappear without intervention by the command. All leaders in

an organization have an impact on Soldiers. It is up to commanders to clarify work objectives and standards and to voice their organizational expectations through open communications and fair treatment. It is imperative that commanders create a supportive organizational climate <sup>16</sup>

## **COMMAND CLIMATE**

According to data collected from command inspection programs, command climate was and continues to be the most significant variable in officer retention. The most important part of a positive command climate is empowering junior officers to lead. Allowing these Soldiers to lead platoons and companies with guidance from senior officers will foster a positive command climate. Strong local leadership, which is not uniformly in place today, is essential for maintaining the organizational climates necessary for operational effectiveness in the 21st century.

Leadership in the Army Reserve units is substandard. It is not that they don't posses fine leaders. The issue is that the USAR is not doing all that it can to train and then select the officers best suited to command and lead Soldiers. The Army Reserve must begin to recognize and measure leadership abilities and the impact that these characteristics have on unit readiness. It is time to hold commanders accountable for unit readiness.

In several studies, conducted in the past few years, ATLDP, ARLDP, and the Objective Force Concept Paper found professional values to be remarkably high in some units however leader development and promotion systems are not up to the task of consistently identifying and advancing highly competent leaders. These studies also found that the Army Reserve rewards system focuses on the accomplishment of short term, measurable, and often trivial tasks but neglects the development of those ethical standards, which are essential to a healthy profession. The most frequently recurring specific themes describing the disparity between ideal and actual standards of behavior in the Officer Corps included selfish, promotion-oriented behavior and inadequate communication between junior and senior officers. It also showed distorted or dishonest reporting of status and statistics on officer efficiency reports.<sup>17</sup>

In the Army Reserve Troop Program Units, variances between ideal and actual standards are condoned, if not engendered, by certain Army Reserve polices regarding officer evaluation, selection for promotion, career concepts and assignment policies, and information reporting systems. Due to these problems resulting from poor leadership, the units are losing good junior officers. To correct this problem, the Army Reserve must transform its command and control according to the Commander of the Army Reserve. The CAR stated that the new demands and

realities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century required a more relevant and ready Army Reserve to meet the basic mission.<sup>18</sup>

The CAR also asserted that as members of the Army Reserve, they must assume a leadership role both within the organization and elsewhere. Family, friends, neighbors, coworkers, and business and community professionals in their hometowns admire and respect their service and sacrifice. Their daily actions should reflect that trust and confidence. Leaders at all levels must always do the right thing for the right reason.

Senior officers must create a command climate that makes the Army Reserve a unique place to both work and live. It is to the benefit of the senior officers to create a positive environment for Soldiers and families to instill in them a desire to remain a part of the troop program unit (TPU). Junior officers should arrange officer calls, hail and farewells, officer physical fitness activities, and other activities that involve the families. The feeling of camaraderie created within the TPU projected a positive open communications between the command and Soldiers.<sup>19</sup>

During peacetime, leadership is not in the limelight as it is during wartime. The commander is seldom held responsible for unit readiness. During the years before Desert Storm, Reserve units rarely trained to standard, yet reports to senior leaders were usually glowing and numbers of personnel were inflated. Only now has the leadership come under fire. It takes a war and a few casualties to get the attention needed to change leadership in the Army Reserves.

Commanders of units must be selected not only on rank and area of concentration (AOC), but also on ability to lead. Military education, climate surveys, and peer reviews should determine if a commander is capable of leading. All commanders should be required to take a pre-command course through the United States Army Reserve Command (USARC), which is responsible for the command and control of units. It is the USARC's responsibility to man, train, equip, and mobilize units, as well as screen and select competent leaders for all Reserve units under USARC's command.

## OFFICER EDUCATION SYSTEM

The present Officer Education System (OES) is designed to prepare officers for the conduct of war. The program teaches officers how to employ combat forces at all three levels of warfare: tactical, operational, and strategic. At the tactical level the focus is on platoon through division engagements taught in Officer Basic Course and Officer Advanced Course. In Combined Arms Staff and Service School, division and corps battles are taught at the

operational level. Command and General Staff College the focus is on subordinate campaign plans, joint and combined operations at the operational level, with a small amount in the strategic level. The United States Army War College, at the strategic level, the focus is on the nature of war, national security strategy, national military strategy, theater strategy, campaign plans, and unified operations.<sup>20</sup>

The military education system is based on the Cold War paradigm in which the officer attended a precommissioning undergraduate education at a military academy or a civilian university. This is followed by twenty years of training in the basic branch (as a staff officer and commander), prior to the final period of senior Service College. OES prepares officers for success at the tactical and operational levels and to serve in positions of a strategic nature at the rank of lieutenant colonel and above. In the present educational structure it is implied that officers would not be assigned in positions that they would have to make decisions or provide advice at a levels they were not yet educated in. Also, the education and training the officers received throughout their career provided adequate basis for advancement to the next level. The officers would then receive additional schooling to help them progress to the highest level in their careers.<sup>21</sup>

The officer's transition from tactical and operational to strategic level during the Cold War era was not an easy task, but it was facilitated by the relatively simple nature of American strategy during this time period. Today things are much different, strategic end states are less clear; therefore the intellectual transition from tactical and operational levels to the strategic level is much more complex. <sup>22</sup>

# **EDUCATIONAL CHALLENGES**

The new security environment has a huge impact on determining the most effective route to take to educate officers for the future. Today's missions to places like Kosovo, Bosnia, and Iraq are more complex than they were in the Cold War missions. Leaders are confronted with decisions that may have operational and strategic consequences. Future conflicts will require adaptive and flexible leaders who are confident to make quick and accurate decisions. Innovative training will be needed to help Soldiers develop their thinking skills earlier and more thoroughly.<sup>23</sup>

Officers attending senior service schools during the Cold War era were able to grasp the American national security strategy with an understanding of deterrence and sustainment, today that is not the case. Senior officers today must understand the integration of the elements of national power: military, diplomatic, economic, and informational (DIME). The reason for this is

that senior officers have to provide advice and perform more tasks in an increasingly complex environment.<sup>24</sup>

Due to the changing environment the military must consider how to educate and develop officers to deal with this level of complexity. Once an officer achieves general officer rank or is asked to serve in senior positions on the Army staff, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, or the Office of Secretary of Defense, the officer should have a full understanding of the full integration of the nation's military, economic, and diplomatic or political instruments of power.<sup>25</sup>

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

Although the Army Reserve training doctrine is fundamentally sound, it must be adapted to reflect the current operational environment. TPU's cannot perform home-station training in accordance with the Army Reserve training doctrine because of funding constraints and lack of undisciplined application of the doctrine. The Army Reserve's training system must be revitalized. Several things need to be done to accomplish this task. First, the training doctrine needs to be updated. Second, home-station training needs to be improved; it should observe the guidelines set-forth by the training doctrine. Third, the Regional Training Center should be fully funded and modernized. The Army Reserve must provide commanders with sufficient resources, training aids and devices, simulators and simulations to improve home-station training. Finally, the Army Reserve must fund, modernize, staff the training centers to provide full spectrum, multi-echelon, combined arms training and leader development experience.<sup>26</sup>

To select the best people for future leadership roles, succession management and talent management systems should be established. Leadership development strategies include education, training, job experience, action-learning projects, and mentoring and coaching. It is up to the Commander of the Army Reserves to allocate the funding for future training and education of Army Reserve Leaders. It is also the responsibility of the commander to assure that all units have the very best and the most qualified leaders possible if the units are to advance into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## OFFICER EDUCATION SYSTEM

The Officer Education System does not train and educate officers in the skills needed for leadership. The Army needs well-educated instructors to teach leadership skills at all levels of the officer's professional education. This should start in the Officer Basic Course and continue throughout the officer's career. Joint operations are part of the new operational environment; a joint education program should prepare officers to lead in a joint environment. Joint operations are taught in Phase I of Command and General Staff Course, but this instruction should be

provided earlier in the education system. The OES system must stay abreast with the changing environment and include the transformation that is taking place in the Army Reserve. Not since the Cold War and the downsizing of the Army Reserve has the education system met the Army's needs. The OES should be revised to focus on a central task and purpose and to promote officer bonding, cohesion, trust, and life-long learning. These schools should coordinate with other schools to synchronize educational and operational experience while educating officers to common standards.<sup>27</sup>

## TRAINING AND LEADER DEVELOPMENT MODEL

At this time, the leader development model is outdated, and a training model is unavailable. The Army Reserve needs a model that shows leaders, staffs, and outside agencies how training and leader development is interrelated and mutually supporting. The model must emphasize Army Reserve culture, mandate standards for Soldiers, leaders and units; provide feedback to leaders and units; promote self-development; balance operational and educational experience; and reflect sound training and leader development principles. The model should provide self-aware adaptive leaders and trained and ready units. By emphasizing institutional training, guiding field training, and stressing self-development, the model will provide a life-long learning paradigm. It will also provide feedback to the Command Secretary of the Army on the management of training and leader development in the Army Reserve.<sup>28</sup>

## SYSTEMS APPROACH TO TRAINING

After Vietnam, the Army Reserve used standards-based training that transformed it into the Army of Excellence that fought in Desert Storm. Standards-based training can do the same for transforming the Army Reserve today. Command standards should be the basis for developing training, assessing performance and providing feedback, but the systems approach designed to publish and document training standards has diminished. The Army Reserve lacks training and education publications and standards for its legacy and interim forces. Without documented, accessible and digital standards, readiness among Soldiers, leaders, and units will falter and possibly endanger battlefield success.<sup>29</sup>

## LIFELONG LEARNING

To be a learning organization that supports life-long learning the Army Reserve must provide training, education, standards and products for leader development. It also must provide doctrine and tools to support and foster life-long learning, balanced education and operational experiences supported by self-development. In addition it must develop and

maintain a web-based Warrior Development Center that publishes standards, doctrinal manuals, training and educational publications, assessment and feedback tools, along with distance-training programs for self-development.

USAR leaders and Soldiers must be at the center of transformation. Otherwise, the focus will be on technology, platforms and weapon systems as the center of gravity. Preparing leaders through technology can lead to dominance on the battlefield and prepare them for the future.<sup>30</sup>

## INDIVIDUAL LEARNING

There are plenty of training manuals available to unit commanders, but with time constraints, they cannot read all of them. It would be better to create lesson plans which highlight specific areas of importance. If the Service schools could provide these lesson plans to the field, they would have to develop a materials index system. By doing this, it would provide unit commanders with one source in which to access training materials.

Another initiative used to support directive study in the field and also reinforce continuous individual learning by officers is to create a library outreach program. Professional journals and other materials could be sent to the officer. An on-line database for computer access could be provided by the service schools.

A personal professional library is another possibility. This could be done during commissioning with additions throughout an officer's career. The library could serve as a life long learning system, giving the opportunity for the officer corps to develop and sanction a common professional language.

There are other possibilities that could address and support a Service-long learning requirement, but the Army Reserve must agree on the importance of a continuous individual learning system. Although the Army Reserve has numerous development programs for officers, it does not recognize nor have any means to follow-up on an individual's progress. The Army Reserve must instill in each officer a personalized learning ethic that augments all other professional initiatives. This is critical to the officer corps' ability to be able to collectively and individually make critical decisions and to effectively address change.

By creating a life-long learning mechanism in the officer corps, there will be a huge impact on the sustainment and the resilience of the corps, making for a stable and reliable agent for leading the Army Reserve through the challenges of today. <sup>31</sup>

## CONCLUSION

The Army Reserve is in transformation, and for the Army Reserve to continue to play a major part in the world today, it must advance with the new training. The USAR leadership and training needs to change to guarantee the relevance of the Army Reserve well into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Transformation and new technology, organizational structure, and tactics are very important, but; more importantly, it is about people and leadership. Soldiers are, and will remain, the greatest asset and the biggest combat multiplier. Soldiers deserve the best possible leadership the Army Reserve can provide. To ensure the Soldier is provided that benefit, the Army Reserve must make some fundamental changes to the way in which leadership is viewed and the way in which training is selected for senior leaders of the future.

Some units train Soldiers very well, while others seem to fall short. There are some units that are cohesive and committed to being the best unit in the command. New Soldiers are assigned to different units, non-commissioned officers and officers; all operate under the same conditions; all utilize the same doctrine, tactics, and techniques; and all operate under the same regulations and procedures. Often within the same division or brigade, but some units stand out as clearly better than others. The answer can only be attributed to one factor, and that is good local leadership.

The place to start developing such leaders is the Officer Education System. There is currently an effort to redesign the system at almost all levels. From pre-commissioning to senior service levels, the Army is making a notable effort to redesign the system to account for the leadership challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Most published studies focus on the requirements for more non-resident time and an increased reliance on distance learning.

Leadership in the Army Reserve is inadequate in certain areas. Now is the time for some serious discussion on how to build and maintain good leadership. With the Army Reserve in a state of transition, leadership should be a central topic throughout its professional education system. Commanders should heed Lieutenant General Helmly's call for unit reform: "Let's get beyond simply stating that "we need to do it" and spend some time discussing why it is important and how to do it. Let's give future leaders the tools they need to make their units as good as they can be. "32"

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## **ENDNOTES**

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